



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For release: Aug. 20, 2014

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Howard County police to focus on safety in school zones

As children prepare to return to school next week, Howard County police are working to ensure that students, parents, teachers and staff arrive safely. Through a continuing back-to-school program, officers will focus on enforcing speed, seat belt and child safety seat laws in school zones.

The H.A.S.T.E. program (Helping Arriving Students Through Enforcement) is aimed at raising awareness about traffic safety in school zones. Targeted patrols will be in place on roadways surrounding elementary, middle and high schools for the first two weeks of the school year. Officers will be working to identify drivers who are speeding in those areas.

“We hope that a police presence around the schools will remind drivers to slow down,” said Police Chief Gary Gardner. “We are asking all motorists to help our children arrive safely to school.”

Once again, to aid in speed enforcement efforts, two portable camera units will be rotated among 13 school zones. These units are used on roadways with issues of excessive speed, but on which speed enforcement vans cannot be safely used. This year, the Howard County Public School System is opening a new school, Thomas Viaduct Middle School, on Banbury Drive, in Hanover. Banbury Drive has been designated as a school zone by the Department of Public Works and is eligible for speed camera enforcement through the county’s speed camera program.

Beginning at the start of the school year, two portable camera units will rotate among the following locations: Atholton High School, Freetown Road; Bushy Park Elementary School, Carrs Mills Road; Dayton Oaks Elementary School, Ten Oaks Road; Pointers Run Elementary School, Great Star Drive walking route; Swansfield Elementary School, Cedar Lane; St. Johns Lane Elementary School, St. Johns Lane; Mt. Hebron High School, St. Johns Lane; Centennial Lane Elementary School, Centennial Lane; Long Reach High School, Tamar Drive; Forest Ridge Elementary School, Gorman Road; Guilford Elementary School, Oakland Mills Road; Glenelg High School, Burntwoods Road; and Jeffers Hill Elementary School, Tamar Drive.

In addition, police will continue to deploy two vans equipped with speed cameras as part of the county’s speed camera program. A list of roadways scheduled for speed enforcement is posted in advance at www.hcpd.org.

Also, as the school year begins, officers will be checking for seat belt and child safety seat use to ensure that all vehicle occupants are properly restrained. Police also are reminding drivers that they are required to stop for school buses with red lights flashing. Officers in covert vehicles will follow school buses to watch for drivers who fail to stop. The fine for this violation is \$570. Officers will also be focused on identifying distracted drivers.

Inside the schools, officers will be conducting mandatory traffic safety seminars for students applying for school parking permits, who must attend with their parents. The police department will continue to conduct traffic safety education and enforcement efforts throughout the school year.

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